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ABSTRACT

A growing portion of Minneapolis youth are dropping out of school before they are prepared for a job. At the same time employers face a growing labor shortage. The city must identify the at-risk youth and intervene early in preparing them for the work world. The common denominator of all factors that increase a youth's risk of chronic unemployment is a significant deficiency in the basic skills. Employers' and youths' perceptions of the skills and attitudes important to employability closely match. The elements of successful youth employment strategies have also been identified: basic skills remediation; comprehensive, individualized services; long-term commitment; and caring adults. Parents and family, the schools, youth, employers, and employment and training programs share the responsibility of preparing young people for the work world. Each sector offers special resources that contribute to the development of employability in youth. These sectors have been working independently and have not succeeded in reaching and preparing at-risk youth for steady employment. Findings, conclusions, and recommendations appear at the beginning of the report. Appendixes include a listing of examples of successful programs for at-risk youth--target group, program, services, a chart illustrating relevant facts and characteristics of Minneapolis Youth Employment Programs, and a 29-item bibliography. (YLB)

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Building the Work Force: Developing Youth Employability

A Report of the 1986–87 MCBEA Task Force on Youth Employment

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*This report was completed in April, 1987. Pamela R. Tucker Coaxum has since become Program Officer at Dayton Hudson Foundation. In June, 1987, Wayne Cox became the new Executive Director of MCBEA.

Dear Reader:

The Minneapolis Community Business Employment Alliance (MCBEA) brings together public and private sector leaders to identify new strategies for addressing structural unemployment.

After it was formed in 1982, MCBEA began to study the magnitude of structural unemployment in Minneapolis. MCBEA defined the employment and training system in the city of Minneapolis, identified the structurally unemployed, developed a continuum of employability intervention strategies and documented the relationship between early childhood education and future employability for at risk children.

In a 1986 task force report, MCBEA explained how employability develops in infancy and grows into full bloom as children reach young adulthood. The report demonstrated that infants and young children need healthful diets, caring adults and a responsive environment to foster good cognitive development, an essential ingredient for learning.

As early learners become young adults, they move closer to the world of work. It then becomes increasingly important to ensure the development of employability skills. Young people must learn the basics, and the basics mean reading, writing, speaking, and computing at a 12th grade level.

Each year a new crop of potential employees comes to employers' doors, eager and ready to work. Because more and more of them have poorly developed employability skills, businesses must spend more money each year to provide basic skills training within the work place. This increases the cost of doing business and weakens a company's ability to maintain a competitive edge.

Statisticians tell us that while fewer workers will come to our doors, proportionally more will be from poorer environments. Growing numbers of children from poor families are not learning the basics in school. It is therefore imperative that the community make it a priority to respond to the needs of these children who are most at-risk of becoming unemployed adults.

As a business leader, I urge you to help at risk young people develop the basics. It makes good business sense, improves the quality of our future work force, reduces public cost of unemployment, improves individual self-esteem, and leads to healthy families and communities.

Join MCBEA in working with at risk youths to ensure that they have the opportunity to become productive workers.

John E. Pearson
Chairman and CEO, Northwestern National Life Insurance Company

Chair, Minneapolis Community Business Employment Alliance (MCBEA)

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Executive Summary

In May 1986, MCBEA convened a task force — composed of 37 representatives of the business sector, the education community, government, youth serving agencies, and foundations — to define "youth employability" for the city of Minneapolis. Specifically, the charges of the task force were to:

1. Define the existing network of employment and job readiness services for youth in the city of Minneapolis, especially for economically and educationally disadvantaged youth;

2. Examine future job opportunities for youth and potential human resource practices for youth employment;

3. Identify the level of resources needed to increase employment opportunities for youth;

4. Describe the standards and effective program components needed to increase employability skills and lifelong employment opportunities for youth;

5. Develop a consensus on standards for programs and resources needed to increase employment opportunities for youth;

6. Develop an action plan to increase the effective utilization of public and private resources for increasing employment opportunities for youth.

After identifying the facets of the youth employment issue, we invited other community and youth leaders to assist in developing an action plan for addressing the needs of youth at risk of future unemployment. We organized a one-day symposium at Spring Hill Center attended by more than 80 individuals committed to improving the employment prospects for at risk youth. The findings were clear. Youth employment at the expense of basic skills would not work. The key elements for ensuring future work opportunities for at risk youth are basic skills training, along with job readiness training, mentoring from caring adults, and a commitment from the business community and funders for jobs and program funding. The task force then used this message as the basic framework for developing its list of recommendations for building employability strategies for at risk youth. The end product is still the same. Youth need basic skills, a work experience, caring adults, and a commitment from all sectors of our community if we are going to minimize adult unemployment.

We urge you to take seriously the recommendations of the Youth Employment Task Force Report. What it tells us is important to Minneapolis. Our reputation as a city in which business, government, education, youth, and community leaders still work in partnership to address social and economic issues that affect the vitality of our community.

Ms. Jane Foster
Executive Director
HIRED

Mr. Ezell Jones
Vice President
Alexander & Alexander

Co-chairs
MCBEA Youth Employment Task Force

Acknowledgements

The Minneapolis Community Business Employment Alliance (MCBEA) thanks the following organizations and individuals for their special contributions toward completing this project and report:

- Dayton Hudson Foundation, General Mills Foundation, Honeywell, Inc. and Jostens, Inc., which provided grant support;
- Ezell Jones and Jane Foster, co-chairs, for their commitment to maintaining open discussion and participation from all members of the community, and especially for the energy they devoted to this project;
- Members of the task force who not only committed their time, but worked to ensure that thoughts were clearly deliberated and that the outcome represented all interests of our community. Thanks also go to Harvey Rucker and Iris Lueck, who assured that there was a meeting place; Duane Scribner, who worked diligently to define at-risk youth; Gary Sudduth, Rose Escanon, Brad Linville, Jim Nelson, and John Smith, who gave the practitioners' view; Kevin Wilkins, David Nasby, and Michael Hyter, who asked the tough business questions; Jan Hively, Donna Harris and Mike Brinda for government's perspective; Harvey Rucker, Diane Hedin, and James Kielsmeier for the view of youth, in and out of school, as well as the educator's perspective; members of the Symposium Committee, who made November 3, 1986, memorable; and members of the Report Committee, who were always willing to read still another draft;
- Sue Bennett for being the catalyst for the symposium, and David Rodbourne and Spring Hill Center for providing the facilities and excellent conference planning services, which helped make the symposium such a success;
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- Sonja Brown who, as always, methodically digested every word, and used her talent for organizing and synthesizing the group process into clear prose;
- Robert A. Dull and Tammy Price, MCBEA staff, who kept the process and information flowing;
- David Cummings and employees of Northwestern National Life Insurance Company for graphics, typesetting, and printing.

This report is dedicated to the youth of Minneapolis: our future labor force.

Sincerely,

Pamela R. Tucker Coaxum

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Findings and Conclusions

Because of educational, economic, and social disadvantages, a growing number of Minneapolis youth are not prepared to enter the adult job market and to support themselves and their families. If Minneapolis is to continue to prosper, the community must develop strategies that answer the fundamental issues regarding youth employability: How do we prepare at-risk youth to succeed, and whose responsibility is it? After several months of research, the task force concluded that:

1. The Minneapolis community should view youth unemployment as an opportunity rather than a problem. At-risk youth have the same capacity to learn and to contribute as all youth. They need the resources to develop that capacity.

   Demographers project that by 1995, youth ages 16–24 will make up only 16 percent of the U.S. population, a 25 percent decline from 1985 numbers. Since this group represents the traditional source of entry-level workers, a continuing decrease in the number of youth may mean a serious labor shortage for local employers. However, the community could avoid this predicted shortage by tapping the resources of at-risk youth, a group previously ignored as a potential labor source. New strategies that identify at-risk youth early and provide the additional instruction and support they need to prepare for the work world will benefit the entire community. Youth will have career possibilities, and employers will have enough productive workers to fill job openings.

2. All sectors of the Minneapolis community should commit to sharing the risks and responsibilities associated with improving the employability of at-risk youth. Successful employability strategies include the following elements: basic skills remediation, comprehensive and individualized services, a long-term commitment from funders, and caring adults. Jobs should be used as incentives for youth to master basic skills, and all efforts should be targeted to the highest risk groups: dropouts, potential dropouts, teen parents, and graduates who are without basic skills competencies and are thus hard to employ.

   Families: Single-parent families living in poverty do not have all the resources to help their children develop the academic and social components of employability. Many parents are eager to cooperate with institutions such as the schools but

do not participate in efforts to develop their children's employability because of fear, mistrust, or lack of knowledge of how to help their children succeed in the school environment. At a minimum, however, parents should ensure that their children attend school every day.

Youth: Unemployability often begins with a lack of normal developmental experiences in infancy and throughout the school years. If communities can enhance self-esteem and self-confidence by providing opportunities for high-quality education and training from preschool through high school, youth will be able to contribute their own special resources toward the economic and social goals of the community. In-school youth must commit to fulfilling high school graduation requirements. Dropouts must commit to completing their General Equivalency Diplomas (GEDs) and/or the educational component of a training program. Both groups should participate in defining the goals of employment training programs.

Schools: More than 20 percent of Minneapolis high school students drop out of school by the 12th grade. Every year, about 5,000 students in grades 7 through 12 are at risk for dropping out. The Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) should adopt new initiatives to reduce the number of dropouts and to improve the basic skills competencies and employment training of at-risk youth. Currently, the schools do not track dropouts nor do they have a uniform, comprehensive dropout recovery and prevention policy. Schools should assign equal importance to employment preparation and post-secondary education, and the community should reward and financially support the schools for efforts to serve all youth.

Employers: As the need for entry-level workers continues to grow, employers should view at-risk youth as a new source of labor. Companies already spend millions of dollars on training and could incorporate the training needs of at-risk youth into those programs. However, they should be offered incentives to take risks in hiring this group, and the best incentive is a guarantee of competence. In cooperation with schools and employment programs, employers should define a threshold of skills necessary for entry-level career jobs.

Programs: Although several excellent training programs currently exist in Minneapolis, there is little coordination of data or services among programs, employers, and schools. There are no uniform program or certification standards for program operators. Policymakers should ensure that programs that meet standards for high quality have adequate funds for the comprehensive preparation of at-risk youth for employment, including the transition period following job placement.

Recommendations

The skills and attitudes required for employability develop gradually throughout childhood under the influence and direction of the entire community: families, schools, the business sector and government. We are responsible for students who reach the young adult stage without learning the skills and attitudes needed to make the transition from school to full-time employment. To date, individual sectors of the community have shown a willingness to try to improve the employability of at risk youth. However, the lack of an integrated system continues to limit their prospects for long-term meaningful employment.

As demonstrated in MCBEA's 1986 task force report, **Preventing Unemployment: A Case for Early Childhood Education**, it makes economic sense to address — early and regularly — the developmental needs of children whose families' lack of educational and financial resources puts them at risk for underachievement in school and unemployment as adults. Strategies that integrate the resources and common expectations of all sectors of the community are the most effective, efficient way to improve the employability of our young people. Schools, employers, and employment program operators must agree that becoming educated is every person's first job and that learning basic skills is the foundation of schooling. For adults and teen parents living independently, public assistance programs must incorporate educational, training, parenting, and employment components.

Recommendations

MCBEA must develop an action plan by January 1988 in which all stakeholders in a quality labor force commit to assuring future employability for at risk youth. To implement the plan, MCBEA should form a council of representatives from all sectors of the community who would meet regularly to coordinate resources and to carry out the following recommendations.

The schools should guarantee that every graduate has achieved a 12th grade competency level in basic skills and is work-ready, as defined by local employers' expectations.

- The Task Force supports a comprehensive delivery system of early childhood development services from birth to age five.
- Early intervention is important for those children who appear to be unmotivated or at risk of losing interest in school.

- Existing educational methods have been ineffective for 20 to 30 percent of high school students. School leaders should be encouraged to experiment in developing the most effective instructional strategies for motivating and retaining at-risk students.
- Every area of curriculum, from kindergarten through grade 12, should reinforce the connection between education and work.
- The schools should design a system to track all school leavers — dropouts and truants and refer them to appropriate programs that will lead to a high school diploma or GED and to work readiness.
- Administrators and teachers should recognize and expand ways to involve parents in the education process, particularly reaching out to parents who do not attend meetings in the school.

Business leaders should guarantee the first opportunity for existing jobs to every high school graduate.

- In partnership with youth, the schools, and program operators, employers should redesign entry-level jobs to include educational and developmental components that will shape the skills and attitudes that are useful in building a career.
- Employers should commit to training managers and supervisors in the special skills required to guide and nurture the at-risk youth they hire.

Parents should assure that education is the No. 1 priority for their children.

- Parents must make sure their children get to school every day.
- Parents must help their children establish a balance among school, work, and the other parts of a young person's life.

Young people must view school as their first and most important job.

- Since a 12th grade competency in basic skills is the cornerstone for future employment success, youth must accept the responsibility of attending school and working toward the requirements of graduation.
- Youth also have a stake and responsibility in participating in the design of employment programs.

Youth employment programs should guarantee that students who complete their programs meet specific competencies — developed collectively by employers, program directors, youth, and the schools.

- While the thrust of the city's efforts to develop youth employability lies in preventing dropouts, the Task Force recognizes that the community needs employment training and service programs to serve dropouts and students who may have graduated without 12th grade skill levels.

- Elements of effective programs include: outreach, needs assessment, basic skills training tied to work experience, mentoring, and positive peer pressure.
- MCBEA should form a council of youth employment and training professionals in order to develop standards for program operators, to monitor and coordinate all public and private employment and training programs to reduce duplication and address gaps in needed services, and to serve as a clearinghouse of information for the business community.

Funders should give priority to youth employment programs that prepare youth for long-term employment and include the elements of effective programs as identified above.

- The Task Force urges funders not to overlook the long-term investment in developing youth employability during good economic times as well as during unfavorable periods.

Building the Work Force: Developing Youth Employability

The Employment Paradox

Minneapolis faces an ironic situation that may cloud its prospects for continued social and economic progress into the next century: A growing portion of the city's young people are dropping out of school before they're prepared to master the next step in the maturation process — getting a job that will support them and launch them on a path of lifelong employment. Simply stated, they lack the educational competencies and the job skills to meet their economic needs. Hindered by those deficiencies and by a host of other disadvantages primarily related to family poverty, these youth tend to become tomorrow's chronically unemployed adults — at great cost to them and to taxpayers.

At the same time, employers face a growing labor shortage. Since 1970, the total number of youth has declined, while job openings in the retail trade and service sectors have mushroomed. Educational requirements for entry level jobs have also expanded. As a result, increasing numbers of entry level jobs remain unfilled, and many local employers fear they will lose out in today's competitive marketplace because of a shortage of educated, productive workers.

Youth unemployment rates

Although Minneapolis unemployment rates traditionally are lower than national urban rates, the city's youth unemployment continues to run twice the rate for adults. And for minority youth, that percentage again doubles. In 1985, 11.2 percent of all 16- to 19-year-olds in the 11-county metropolitan area were unemployed.[1] That statistic represents the number of people seeking jobs and not finding them divided by the total number of 16- to 19-year-olds in the labor force. The State Department of Jobs and Training estimates that more than 24 percent of the comparable minority age group were not working.[2] However, the actual number of unemployed youth is probably greater than statistics indicate because the U.S. Department of Labor's unemployment calculations do not include people who have never sought jobs.

The most recent U.S. Census data indicate that in 1980, 2,042, or 9 percent, of the city's approximately 22,500 16- to 19-year-olds were not in school, had not graduated, and were not working.[3] Perhaps even more disturbing is the Minneapolis Planning Department's projection that each year 30 percent of

the city's 10th graders will drop out of school by their senior year.[4] Some have the personal and family resources that enable them to get GEDs and move on to meaningful full time employment, job training, or further education. But those without the knowledge and the financial and psychological support to "connect" with school or work will likely sink into the growing pool of 16 to 19 year-olds who have not graduated, are not in school, and are not working. Based on demographic trends of the 1980s, the Planning Department estimates that though the total number of 16- to 19-year-olds may have declined since 1980, the proportion of undereducated, unemployed youth has increased — and will continue to grow.

Youth employment and the employability continuum

Unemployment — or employment — is not a serious issue for most teens. The period between ages 16 and 21 is usually a time during which work supplements school in a transition to full-time adult employment. Under the guidance of families and the schools, most youth continue to learn academic skills and gain exposure to and experience in the world of work. By experimenting with part-time jobs, many youth learn self-reliance, a sense of responsibility, and other tenets of the work ethic as they earn extra spending money or save for additional training/education. Although studies indicate that as many as two-thirds of America's juniors and seniors work part-time,[5] employment is an option for most — not a requirement. For the majority of young people, a part-time job is of secondary importance. The most important work for 16- to 21-year-olds is getting the education and training to prepare for *future* employment.

That process is interrupted for youth who drop out of school or who finish school without mastering basic skills. Some return to a regular or alternative school. Some earn a GED and then find a satisfactory job or enroll in a vocational program or college. But for others, dropping out becomes a barrier to personal fulfillment and economic self sufficiency, particularly for severely undereducated youth who lack the psychological and financial support of a stable, nurturing family. Many of these youth want to live independently — some have children to support — but the minimum wages paid for the jobs available to them in the retail and service sector will not cover their living costs, especially if they must pay for child care. Often, these jobs do not offer transferable skills, benefits, or the opportunity for advancement. Dropouts who can get only low-paying, dead-end jobs frequently find themselves stuck indefinitely at minimum wage and end up dropping in and out of the work force.

Structural vs. cyclical unemployment

For this small but growing proportion of the youth population, chronic unemployment or underemployment as adults results not from a shortage of available jobs, but from a significant

deficiency in the work skills and attitudes expected of them in the work world. As opposed to "cyclical unemployment," which is tied to the demand for certain occupations and skills, unskilled and undereducated youth are said to be "structurally unemployed." That is, this group cannot find adequate jobs even during good economic times because they lack marketable skills.

Economic changes

The shift in the state's economy from a manufacturing and agriculture foundation to an information and service base has compounded the employment difficulties for at-risk youth. Educational requirements for entry-level jobs have increased, and basic analytical skills and interpersonal communication skills have become prerequisites for meaningful employment.

In earlier decades, youth could drop out of school and begin working on an assembly line, moving up the company's hierarchy by learning on the job. That scenario no longer exists. Today's careers require at least the competencies expected to accompany a high school diploma, and that minimum is expected to increase. The National Alliance of Business predicts that "by 1990, three out of four jobs will require some education or technical training after high school."[6]

As educational requirements increase, so do the risks — for chronic unemployment among young dropouts; for students likely to drop out because of truancy, very low academic achievement, and learning or behavioral problems; and for high school graduates who have not developed minimum academic and work skills.

The price of unemployment

The community's current inability or unwillingness to help *all* of its youth, including at-risk youth, to make the transition from education to work proves costly for youth as well as for the city. Low self-esteem, increased crime rates, and welfare dependency go hand-in-hand with low literacy and unemployment. Nationwide, it costs an average of $14,000 a year to keep a young person in jail.[7] Research conducted at Stanford University indicates that the cost of high school dropouts ages 25 to 34 conservatively amounts to $77 billion every year: $71 billion in lost tax revenue, $3 billion in welfare and unemployments costs, and $3 billion in crime prevention.[8] Added to these tangible costs is the incalculable and disgraceful loss of human dignity and of the potential contributions of these young people.

But perhaps the most disastrous, long-lasting cost of chronic unemployment is the community's loss of trained, productive workers for the future. In order to compete successfully in a global economy, communities need an educated, capable labor force. David T. Kearns, chairman and chief executive officer of Xerox Corporation, has called the quality of our work force a "survival issue for America."

Future trends

The implications of two demographic trends are convincing communities of the urgent need to adequately educate and train all youth, including the at-risk population largely ignored in the past. The baby boom of 1947 to 1962 was followed by a dearth of births from 1963 to 1977. As a result, the teen labor force in the United States has declined from 9.6 million in 1979 to a projected 7.9 million in 1986, according to U.S. Department of Labor statistics. Meanwhile, due to urban migration patterns and higher birth rates for minority groups, who are three times more likely to live in poverty than whites,[9] the proportion of families living in poverty is increasing — along with school dropouts, single-parent households, and chronic unemployment. There are fewer teens available to join the work force, while the proportion of at-risk teens who may not be prepared to enter the work force is growing.

Those trends hold true for Minneapolis as well. Since 1970, the city's school-age population (ages 5–19) has dropped by half.[10] The number of 14- to 17-year-olds dropped 8.5 percent between 1980 and 1985 and will continue to drop due to the smaller number of 12- and 13-year-olds. There has been a small increase in elementary school students due to the "echo baby boom," but this group will not move into high schools until the 1990s, and its size will not match that of the 1960s.

The proportion of students from poor families continues to rise, and if historical patterns hold true, the number and proportion of children at risk for future unemployment will rise accordingly. The City Planning Department estimates that one of five Minneapolis preschoolers lives in poverty.[11] Of 14,904 students enrolled in Minneapolis public high schools during the 1985–86 school year, 38.7 percent participated in the free or reduced-cost lunch program, up from 34.9 percent in 1980–81.[12]

An increase in the number of students living in single-parent homes is another indicator of the growing portion of city residents who live in poverty. Historically, single-parent households earn less than two-parent homes, and since 1970 single-parent households in Minneapolis have increased by 60 percent.[13] In 1985–86, 47 percent of MPS students lived in other than two-parent households; 37.3 percent lived with their mothers only, compared to 32.6 percent in 1981–82.[14]

The drop in the youth population plus the growth of the at-risk segment of that group suggests that businesses will increasingly seek the resources of the educationally and socially disadvantaged in order to meet demands for new workers. Nationally, some nine million jobs will be created in the retail and service sectors over the next 10 years. Yet the number of

new workers — youth ages 16 through 19 — has dropped by 37 percent since 1971.[15] Locally, economic expansion has been concentrated in the service sector, which grew by 21 percent from 1970 to 1980.[16] Meanwhile, the teen labor force in the 11-county Twin Cities area declined from 130,000 in 1980 to 101,000 in 1984.

The paybacks

There are economic and social rewards for communities that design comprehensive strategies to identify at-risk youth and to intervene early in preparing them to succeed in the work world. Measuring saved welfare expenditures and increased tax revenues alone, studies of federal job training programs have shown that, for example, the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA) returned from 23 to 43 percent on the original investment, and the Job Corps returns $1.38 for every $1 spent.[17] The payback is $2.18 for On-The-Job Training, a program in which private sector employers hire an inexperienced worker and then provide closely supervised training for four months in exchange for government reimbursement of half the participant's wages.

For youth, employment training strategies offer the benefits of earning a regular income, building self-confidence, developing high-school-level basic skills, thinking about long-term work, and taking that first step on a lifetime career ladder.

Employers gain a work force whose skills will help them profit in a highly competitive global marketplace. New workers also mean more consumers, and the resulting health of local economies provides the foundation for thriving communities. As the next century approaches, employment training initiatives — or the lack of them — will be a major factor in the prosperity — or decline — of America's urban centers.

Defining the Target Population

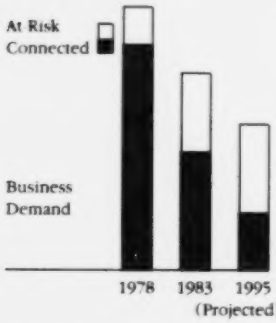
Who is at risk?

Research demonstrates that several factors increase a youth's risk of chronic unemployment:[18]

- Drug use
- Involvement in illegal activities
- Involvement in the underground economy
- Teen motherhood
- Racial discrimination
- Male gender
- Low income
- Lack of high school diploma
- Lack of family support

Typically, a combination of these barriers stands between at-risk youth and entry-level career jobs. But the common denominator of all the above factors is a significant deficiency in the basic skills: reading, speaking, listening, math, problem-solving skills, and citizenship.[19]

Declining Youth Population With an Increasing At-Risk Segment Compared to Rising Business Demand for Entry-Level Employees



In 1978, 23% of the total U.S. population were between the ages of 16 and 24. By 1983 that percentage had dropped to 19%. Based on current birth rates, it will further decline to 16% by 1995. At the same time, the percentage of youth at risk is growing.

Assuming that the nation's economy continues to expand at a moderate pace, business will be forced to dip increasingly into the at-risk segment of the entry-level youth employment pool.

Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce. Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1984.

National Commission on Secondary Education for Hispanics. Make Something Happen, 1984.

U.S. Department of Commerce. Business Conditions Digest, March 1985.

U.S. Congress. Congressional Budget Office, Poverty Among Children, May 1985.

National Education Association. The Strategic Context of Education in America, 1985-1995.

Indicators of Growing Youth Problems

Children in poverty	▲ Up from 16% in 1970 to 22% in 1985. About 14 million children live in poverty. Almost half of Black children and one-third of Hispanic children live in poverty.
Drug and alcohol abuse	▲ Up 60-fold since 1960.
Teenage pregnancy	▲ Up 109% for whites, 10% for non-whites since 1960.
Unmarried mothers	▲ Up from less than 1% in 1970 to over 6% today.
Female headed households	▲ Up from 12% in 1970 to 23% in 1984.
Teenage homicide	▲ Up more than 200% for whites, 16% for non-whites since 1950.
Teenage suicide	▲ Up more than 150% since 1950.
Teenage crime	▲ Arrests up from 18% in 1960 to 34% in 1980 (18-to-24-year olds).
Teenage unemployment	▲ Up 35% for non-whites, 60% for whites since 1961.

From *Recommenting Youth: The Next Stage of Reform*, Business Advisory Commission of the Education Commission of the States.

Based on information about this cluster of problems, the Task Force has agreed that employment training strategies should be targeted toward three groups of 14- to 21-year-olds: 1) unemployed and underemployed dropouts; 2) potential dropouts, including students who have been suspended, are taking remedial classes, or have high rates of absenteeism, as well as those in alternative schools, the County Home School, and the Juvenile Center; and 3) teen parents — those in school as well as those who have dropped out.

The high-risk profile: the numbers

According to the 1980 U.S. Census, 3,696 Minneapolis youth ages 16 to 19 were not in school and had not graduated. Fewer than half were employed, either part time or full-time. More than 2,000, or 55 percent, were not working at all — this at the stage of life when traditionally youth enter post-secondary education, training programs, or the work force as a first step toward steady employment and lifelong support.

During the 1985–86 school year, 1,813 students officially dropped out of Minneapolis Public Schools.[20] Another 5,074 were at risk of dropping out, including 2,000 with high absentee rates; 1,474 who were suspended; 1,143 enrolled in special education programs; 101 in the County Home School; 45 in the Juvenile Center; and 311 in alternative high schools.

To drop out, students must be at least 16 years old. Each year the majority of dropouts leave because of "school problems," one of four Minnesota Department of Education codes used to record dropout information. The other reasons are marriage, entry into the Armed Forces, or economic problems. During 1985–86, 1,803 students dropped out because of school problems; 5 left for economic reasons; 5 enlisted in the Armed Services; and none left to get married.[21]

Minority students tend to drop out more frequently than white students. During the 1985–86 school year, 35.8 percent of 12th grade American Indian students dropped out.[22] For blacks, the percentage was 30.2, for Hispanics, 2.7 percent, and for Asians, 15.4 percent. Some 14.4 percent of white students dropped out in their senior year.

Most dropout activity occurs in grades 10 through 12, and the Minneapolis Planning Department estimates that in any given year, 30 percent of Minneapolis 10th graders — 899 youth in 1985–86 — are at risk of dropping out by 12th grade to join the ranks of kids just "hanging out." Technically, students under the age of 16 cannot drop out. However, school officials concede that in reality many 13- to 15-year-olds do not attend school, even though their names are still on school rolls. Dropout numbers steadily increase with each succeeding grade level.

Pregnancy is a major "unofficial" reason why females drop out of school. Officials find it difficult to determine how many leave to have a baby because pregnancy is not included in the Minnesota Department of Education's

list of official reasons for dropping out. However, Health Department statistics lead school officials to think that the number is much higher than their informal counting methods indicate. Of 284 girls known to be pregnant last year, 27 dropped out, 4 enrolled in another program, 185 enrolled in the MPS' Pregnant Adolescent Continuing Education (PACE) program, 67 remained in their own school, and the whereabouts of one student was unknown.[23]

Minneapolis Health Department records indicate that 717 teens gave birth in 1985. And, using an accepted national statistic that 78 percent drop out once they deliver their babies, it is likely that 559 Minneapolis teen mothers — not 27 — left school last year to become full-time parents. Some were probably included in the "school problems" group of dropouts. Others may not have officially dropped out but did not show up for classes.

The high-risk profile: social characteristics

High-risk youth tend to come from low-income, unemployed single parent families. Urban migration patterns have created low-income neighborhoods with high concentrations of unemployed adults lacking resources and skills needed to build youth employability. Most high risk youth have no car and find it difficult getting to jobs beyond their neighborhoods. Minority youth in particular fear working in unfamiliar locations and are reluctant to even apply for jobs outside the city.

The high-risk profile: personal characteristics

In testimony before the Youth Employment Task Force, directors of local alternative schools and community job training programs cited several characteristics that serve as job barriers for high-risk kids. In addition to below-grade-level skills, most have low self-esteem and are not motivated in traditional educational programs.

Nearly all the program participants want to work, but they tend to hold unrealistic expectations about the job market, scorning the plentiful fast-food jobs in hopes of landing top-dollar jobs with immediate gratification. Making a fast buck on the street or cycling through entry-level retail jobs is easier for many youth, so they tend to think they don't really need to prepare themselves for future employment.

For minority youth, these perceptual and skill barriers are even more pronounced. Due to historic educational and employment practices related to institutional and covert racism, minority youth tend to be poorer, have even lower basic skill competencies, and have fewer jobs in their neighborhoods. The lack of transportation and child care are other major obstacles to employment.

Number of Dropouts by Grade, Racial/Ethnic, Gender (1985-1986 School Year)

	Indian Americans			Asian Americans			Black Americans			White Americans		
Grade	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
7												
8	3	2	5							3		3
9	11	24	35		4	4	35	24	59	55	37	92
10	38	30	68	6	4	10	64	45	109	167	121	288
11	26	33	59	9	4	13	101	62	163	175	161	336
12	20	29	49	16	13	29	83	88	171	176	124	300
Total	98	118	216	31	25	56	283	219	502	576	443	1019

Cumulative Enrollment by Grade, Racial/Ethnic, Gender (1985-1986 School Year)

	Indian Americans			Asian Americans			Black Americans			White Americans		
Grade	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
7	107	120	227	129	94	223	449	393	842	845	755	1600
8	109	116	225	104	97	201	402	398	800	905	821	1726
9	128	119	247	129	114	243	457	444	901	1163	1055	2218
10	125	104	229	124	116	240	424	403	827	1441	1230	2671
11	64	86	150	154	99	253	363	344	707	1370	1243	2613
12	58	79	137	105	83	188	277	289	566	1087	995	2082
Total	591	624	1215	745	603	1348	2372	2271	4643	6811	6099	12910

Hispanic Americans			Minority Americans			Total		
M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
								0
1		1	4	2	6	7	2	9
3		3	49	52	101	104	89	193
4	6	10	112	85	197	279	206	485
4	1	5	140	100	240	315	261	576
1		1	120	130	250	296	254	550
13	7	20	425	369	794	1001	812	1813

Hispanic Americans			Minority Americans			Total		
M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
20	20	40	705	627	1332	1550	1382	2932
37	24	61	652	635	1287	1557	1456	3013
37	28	65	751	705	1456	1914	1760	3674
27	23	50	700	646	1346	2141	1876	4017
16	19	35	597	548	1145	1967	1791	3758
21	16	37	461	467	928	1548	1462	3010
158	130	288	3866	3628	7494	10677	9727	20404

Dropouts As A Percentage of Each Grade, Racial/Ethnic, Gender Category (1985-1986 School Year)

	Indian Americans			Asian Americans			Black Americans			White Americans		
Grade	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
7												
8	2.8	1.7	2.2							0.3		0.2
9	8.6	20.2	14.2		3.5	1.6	7.7	5.4	6.5	4.7	3.5	4.1
10	30.4	28.8	29.7	4.8	3.4	4.2	15.1	11.2	13.2	11.6	9.8	10.8
11	40.6	38.4	39.3	5.8	4.0	5.1	27.8	18.0	23.1	12.8	13.0	12.9
12	34.5	36.7	35.8	15.2	15.7	15.4	30.0	30.4	30.2	16.2	12.5	14.4
Total	16.6	18.9	17.8	4.2	4.1	4.2	11.9	9.6	10.8	8.5	7.3	7.9

Dropouts As A Percentage of All Dropouts (N = 1813) (1985-1986 School Year)

	Indian Americans			Asian Americans			Black Americans			White Americans		
Grade	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
7												
8	0.2	0.1	0.3		0.2							0.2
9	0.6	1.3	1.9		0.2	0.2	1.9	1.3	3.3	3.0	2.0	5.1
10	2.1	1.7	3.8	0.3	0.2	0.6	3.5	2.5	6.0	9.2	6.7	15.9
11	1.4	1.8	3.3	0.5	0.2	0.7	5.6	3.4	9.0	9.7	8.9	18.5
12	1.1	1.6	2.7	0.9	0.7	1.6	4.6	4.9	9.4	9.7	6.8	16.5
Total	5.4	6.5	11.9	1.7	1.4	3.1	15.6	12.1	27.7	31.8	24.4	56.2

From *Minneapolis Public Schools Student Statistical Report, 1985-1986.*

Hispanic Americans			Minority Americans			Total		
M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
								0.0
2.7		1.6	0.6	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.1	0.3
8.1		4.6	6.5	7.4	6.9	5.4	5.1	5.3
14.8	26.1	20.0	16.0	13.2	14.6	13.0	11.0	12.1
25.0	5.3	14.3	23.5	18.2	21.0	16.0	14.6	15.3
4.8		2.7	26.0	27.8	26.9	19.1	17.4	18.3
8.2	5.4	6.9	11.0	10.2	10.6	9.4	8.3	8.9

Hispanic Americans			Minority Americans			Total		
M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
								0.0
0.1		0.1	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.4	0.1	0.5
0.2		0.2	2.7	2.9	5.6	5.7	4.9	10.6
0.2	0.3	0.6	6.2	4.7	10.9	15.4	11.4	26.8
0.2	0.1	0.3	7.7	5.5	13.2	17.4	14.4	31.8
0.1		0.1	6.6	7.2	13.8	16.3	14.0	30.3
0.7	0.4	1.1	23.4	20.4	43.8	55.2	44.8	100.0

Skills disparities: the sources of risk
Dropouts, potential dropouts, and teen parents face a high risk of chronic unemployment because of the disparity between the attitudes and skills they offer and the attributes employers want. Employers expect literacy, yet a majority of the nation's at-risk youth read and work math problems at a 6th grade level.[24] Service sector jobs require a literacy level of grade 9.2. For technical and managerial occupations, the threshold is 12.4.[25]

Employers expect a strong work ethic, yet most impoverished at-risk youth lack role models that embody this value system. For similar reasons, at-risk youth know little about how to dress, act, and talk on the job.

With entry-level qualifications expected to increase, the gap between at-risk youth and adequate full-time employment will only widen. A 1986 report by the National Alliance of Business predicts that entry-level jobs will increasingly require basic analytical and interpersonal skills. Authors of "The Five Year Dilemma," a 1985 report by the Employment and Training Subcommittee of the National Governors Association, concur with that forecast, citing our society's move to an information and service economy as the reason for a new emphasis on thinking and human relations skills.

A 1985 survey of Twin Cities employers by Literacy 85, the forerunner of the Minnesota Adult Literacy Campaign, reported that local employers attach great value to basic skills competencies for prospective employees and that the need for those skills will continue to grow. "Future changes in the workplace will require workers to have not only higher levels of basic skills," the study concluded, "but also higher levels of problem solving, logical thinking, and interpersonal communication skills."

Employers know what they want in entry-level workers. As the demand for new workers continues to outpace supply, the business sector has begun to recognize the need to join educational systems and other sectors of the community in designing strategies to develop the employability of at-risk youth.

Developing Employability

The employer's perspective

Several national studies have found that employers in a variety of businesses and industries look for the following qualifications in young applicants:

- Basic verbal, writing, and mathematical skills;
- Work maturity, including the ability to follow instructions and to satisfy basic job requirements such as punctuality and regular attendance;
- An awareness of the world of work, including some sense of one's own occupational interests and opportunities and the requirements of a competitive, free enterprise system;
- Occasionally, a specific skill such as the use of certain tools or machinery;
- Positive work-related attitudes, including a strong work ethic and knowledge of proper behavior on the job.

Local surveys confirm those views.[26] Employers want youths who can read, write, and interact positively with supervisors and peers. With the advent of the computer age, those prerequisites are expanding. Special occupational skills are not required. Indeed, most employers prefer to provide their own specific job training.

Twin Cities employers emphasize the need for workers to continuously update their knowledge and to commit themselves to lifelong learning.[27] Technological changes are requiring workers to be more flexible and more knowledgeable as they adapt to the new workplace. Most can expect to retrain for a different occupation several times during their careers.

The youth perspective

Minnesota's young people seem to clearly understand what it takes to get entry level career jobs. According to the results of two recent studies — one a statewide and the other a Minneapolis survey, both of which included at risk youth — youths' perception of the skills and attitudes important to employability closely matches that of employers.

As part of its ongoing research into the opinions and concerns of the state's teenagers, the University of Minnesota's Center for Youth Development and Research asked 725 high school students in April 1984 to reflect on their plans and preparation for adult life, including their career expectations and the impact of family, school, and work experience. Half of the 14- to 18-year-olds surveyed in the Minnesota Youth Poll lived in the metro area, half in greater Minnesota.

The youth surveyed reported high career aspirations. Females considered the most serious potential barriers to achieving employment goals to be: the competitive job market in their chosen field, the lack of money for post secondary education training, the lack of necessary skills, not knowing the "right" people, and a lack of knowledge about career possibilities. Males thought that a lack of money, the tight job market, and insufficient knowledge about careers presented the highest hurdles between them and their future jobs.

A study conducted by The Earl Craig Company, Minneapolis, in December 1986 for the SchoolWork Committee of the MPS also focused on youths' views of the barriers to adequate employment. However, a greater portion of the youth in this survey were high-risk, including graduates of alternative schools. The discussion questions centered on the flip side of employment barriers — the prerequisites to getting "good" jobs: what it takes, how to go about it, and how well the schools prepare youth for future employment.

Students in all six focus groups agreed that education and training are vital to getting a good job. Knowledge and skills are essential, they said, and a high school diploma provides a necessary credential. But a high school education is not enough in today's increasingly polarized job market. Students need additional education — college and vocational school — or career-specific work experience.

The two most frequently cited barriers to future career-type jobs were the intense competition in the job market and the lack of money to pay for additional training, including the costs of clothes, food, rent, and transportation for students living on their own. Also rated important were a positive attitude and the self-confidence that results from "people believing in you."

Study participants perceived a host of other less frequent, but significant, obstacles to employment: pregnancy, racial and sexual prejudice, the lack of support and guidance from family and school, and the lack of work experience.

These youth recognize that much of the responsibility for finding jobs that both satisfy them and pay for their needs falls on their shoulders. They're willing to try hard. "Now I've got to push myself to get myself going," said one young man. "If I want to have something more than a minimum job for the rest of my life, I've got to do more for myself now."

But they also recognize that they need help: more mentors, stable, nurturing family lives, and supportive parents. They would like more one-on-one help from teachers or program operators with career planning, job preparation, and financial aid and job applications. Many said the schools should provide more information about careers and the job market earlier in high school so

that students can prepare accordingly. Teachers should provide specific help in setting up and preparing for job interviews.

The theme that seems to tie all these needs together is that the adults in children's lives can make the difference between success and failure. Whether they're parents or teachers, employment training program staff or mentors, the confidence and care they convey to youth translates into self confidence and the willingness to try. "People," said one youth, "can help you get the right attitude to go out there and do what you want to do."

Employers want good employees — workers who can do the job. At risk youth want good jobs, "rent money jobs," and their perceptions of what that requires match nearly item for item the employers' list of desirable aptitudes. Yet despite the apparent agreement, youth unemployability persists. Given the complex interaction of the multiple factors that develop a child's employability from infancy on, this dilemma is perhaps not surprising. But the situation is nonetheless frustrating for employment and education professionals. Research and the testimony of Task Force members points to a possible explanation for the dilemma: to date, most strategies to address youth employment training have lacked a comprehensive, collaborative approach that asks for changes from every sector of the community and incorporates the resources of all partners.

Elements of successful employment strategies

After the Civilian Conservation Corps and National Youth Administration programs of the 1930s, the federal government's next major employment programs for low-income teens emerged during the 1960s as part of President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty. Education, training, and work experience were the focus of such early efforts as the Neighborhood Youth Corps (NYC), primarily for in-school youth, and the Job Corps, a comprehensive program that provided dropouts with remedial education, skills training, medical care, job counseling, and room and board in residential centers. Between 1960 and 1970, 1 million youth enrolled in the NYC, and last year the Job Corps served some 60,000 youth, two-thirds of them minorities.[28]

In 1974, Congress passed the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA) to decentralize job creation activities to the state and local governments. Despite the administration change, federal programs under CETA continued to focus primarily on providing part-time and summer jobs for in-school youth.

To help determine new directions for federal policy, Congress passed the Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act (YEDPA) in 1977. The Department of Labor's Office of Youth Programs contracted for more than 60 demonstration projects and set up eval-

uations of the Job Corps and Supported Work, a highly structured work experience program for low-income high school dropouts. Results of this research and other national studies, together with ongoing evaluation of model job programs by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, New York, have identified the elements of successful youth employment strategies:

Basic skills remediation. Improving the reading, writing, speaking, and problem-solving skills of undereducated youth has the greatest long-term effect on increasing their employment levels. Stated another way, researchers have determined that "the basic cause of serious, persistent youth labor market problems is the lack of basic literacy skills among some youth . . . these deficiencies can be remedied only through intensive efforts."[29] Work experience, job search skills, and job placement improve employability. However, their effects are short-lived unless they are combined with education.

The Job Corps is a highly successful example of this kind of effort. Cost per student per year is $6,244 which, in terms of tax revenues generated and welfare costs saved, is returned to society in three years. Of the 1.1 million poor dropouts aged 16 to 21 who have graduated from the Job Corps since 1964, 75 percent have found a job, returned to school, or entered the military.[30]

Comprehensive, individualized services. Single-component programs are inadequate for high-risk youth. Comprehensive programs that integrate a range of training elements — basic education, job skill training, work experience, and pre-employment preparation — are more effective. Providing support services such as transportation, child care, and medical care also are important in a holistic approach to meeting youths' needs.

Long-term commitment. Short-term job preparation programs do not have sustainable effects. The best paybacks result when training and education are comprehensive and last long enough to produce competencies, as in the Job Corps and its nonresidential counterpart, Job Start.

Caring adults: the human resource factor. Research results are clear: Strategies that emphasize basic skills instruction plus job skill training, job readiness, and work experience will improve the employability of at-risk youth. But the degree to which such initiatives succeed depends on the skillfulness and commitment of the adults who implement them: parents, teachers, job supervisors, and program operators. If the adults in youths' lives have the skills and the caring to create a nurturing, supportive environment, youth have a good chance to learn how to succeed.

Developing Employability: The Resources

Parents and family, the schools, youth, employers, and employment and training programs share the responsibility of preparing young people for the work world. Each sector offers special resources that contribute to the development of employability in youth, from infancy to adulthood. To date, however, these sectors have been working independently and have not succeeded in reaching and preparing at-risk youth for steady employment.

Parents and family: resources

After more than a decade of study on the major influences that affect young people's career decisions, researchers have concluded that parents, more than any other group or institution, set the course for their children's future work paths.[31] By teaching, offering rewards and punishments, and setting examples, parents influence their children's values, attitudes, and beliefs about themselves as well as the concept of work.

For normal development and maturity to occur, the career plans of youth should develop as they develop physically and psychologically. During infancy and childhood, parents lay the groundwork for children's future career decisions. Children learn that working is one of the things adults do. They hear and observe parents' work values and notice whether people think it's important to get to work on time.

From ages four to seven, children begin to become aware of different occupations, and as they move into preadolescence, the home environment plays a major role in shaping children's view of themselves and their future. Children begin to get a sense of self-worth based on how well they do in school and how their parents respond. Parents' expectations for school attendance and achievement help fuel their children's ambitions.

As adolescents, young people may take part-time jobs to earn extra spending money. Adults, however, view youth employment as the opportunity for youth to learn responsibility and to get a sense of what the work world is all about. During their teens, youth begin to focus on their own abilities, interests, and values as they narrow their career options. And during the final developmental stage, from ages 18 to 25, parents work to launch their children in careers. Most feel their responsibilities are not complete until their children are working full time.

Throughout the developmental stages, parents teach their children the values they bring home from the workplace. If communication skills are important on

their jobs, for example, the skills become important to their children. But most important, children learn early in life what to think about themselves. If parents are supportive and nurturing, young people get the impression that others like them.[32] They develop healthy self-concepts and gain self-confidence, and according to researchers, these two attributes are the major predictors of long-term career outcomes.

In addition to providing encouragement, parents can provide the psychological support that enables young people to take risks in starting careers. Parents who have the financial resources to pay for post-secondary education offer their children tremendous advantages. As a group, these parents also tend to teach young people to delay gratification and to think about the future.

Parents and family: gaps

At-risk children may miss out on many aspects of normal development. Teens living in families where no adults are employed may lack the role models that teach the value of work. If no one around them has a job, these children do not have the opportunity to learn the behaviors and attitudes of the work culture at home.

Parents of at-risk youth may not have learned how to deal with the "system," particularly the schools, and their lack of involvement hinders their children's achievement. The lack of knowledge about careers and how to prepare for them becomes another obstacle for these children.

Many single parents lack the extra time their children sometimes need for assistance with school and work. Frequently, they find themselves "just trying to get by."

The schools: resources

Communities look to their schools to provide the formal instruction that children need to prepare for their adult lives as workers, parents, and citizens. Schools are expected to provide at least the basic skills as well as career information, specific vocational skills, and other kinds of employment preparation.

Basic skills. The MPS have developed the benchmark testing system to ensure that students meet citywide objectives in reading, math, and writing. Students who fail to meet the achievement standards receive additional instruction, and youth must pass the ninth grade benchmark tests in order to receive a diploma. Although the achievement standards system represents a step toward educational excellence for the majority of MPS students, the increased performance expectations have also "pushed" many low-achieving at-risk students out the door.

Employment preparation. To prepare students to make the transition to the work world, the MPS provide career information, employment training programs, and cooperative education programs. Career education is built into all vocational education courses.

In ninth grade, students explore various career choices in a three-to-

four-week unit in social studies. Seniors spend three days on the topic of "Looking beyond High School," which includes opportunities to attend local career and college fairs. A proposed career development program for grades 7 through 12 would include career preparation units at every grade level.

Business education, advanced magnet, and cooperative education programs are available to all students. Business education includes accounting, typing, and office procedures classes as well as courses in business law, consumer education, and personal record keeping.

The school district also offers advanced business magnet programs at Edison High School in data processing, accounting, shorthand, model office and word processing. In conjunction with Investors Diversified Services (IDS), MPS offer the Academy of Finance program, which allows participants to take a college accounting course during their junior year and to work at IDS. During their senior year students take additional college classes.

Cooperative education programs use the community as a classroom. Seniors may choose from four programs: business and office, home economics, marketing and distribution, and trade and industry. Students attend school in the morning and work in the afternoon. In 10th and 11th grades, students also can take job preparation program courses outside the classroom.

Dropouts and potential dropouts. The MPS have no systemwide, comprehensive policy regarding dropout recovery and prevention. However, dropouts can enroll in one of four programs, including two adult education programs, and individual schools can refer students to two groups of alternative programs. When students drop out, school social workers make every attempt to locate them and convince them to return to school or enroll in an alternative program that will lead to a high school diploma or GED. But with no unified tracking method and limited resources, the schools are unable to make contact with the majority of dropouts.

Dropouts are served by the Minneapolis Federation of Alternative Schools (six schools), three private programs, the MPS Work Opportunity Center, the Menlo Park program, MPS Vocational Education for Adult Advancement, and the MPS Adult Basic and Continuing Education program administered through the Community Education Department. During the 1986–87 school year, these programs are serving approximately 840 students.[35]

The schools: gaps

Although the MPS have achieved excellence in many areas and are to be commended for taking the controversial step of instituting achievement standards, the system continues to fail for 20 to 30 percent of its high school students. Many factors influence a child's dropping out, but it remains the school's responsibility to develop new ways to meet the needs of at risk students before they drop out. Once out of school, they become the responsibility of the entire community.

The Task Force recognizes that society does not reward schools for dealing effectively with at-risk youth. Instead of measuring a school's excellence by achievement standards, we should gauge its quality and inclusiveness by looking at the attendance rate, dropout rate, and achievement level of the lowest one-fourth of students. Projects and programs that deal with students' positive self-worth should become part of the curriculum, especially for youth who do not achieve academically.

In addition, the Task Force has identified the following gaps:

- At-risk students have missed various components of normal development. Schools need to develop more creative ways for them to achieve school success.
- Schools must intervene early to prevent dropouts. Characteristics of potential dropouts may be apparent as early as kindergarten and first grade. Such students need intensive, individualized help to improve their social and academic skills, their self-esteem, and their often fatalistic outlook.
- Although MPS offer some fine vocational programs, they are of little benefit to at-risk youth, who tend to drop out by 9th or 10th grade when such offerings would become available to them.
- The schools do not track dropouts. Such data would be valuable in determining the need for additional education/training services and in setting future policy direction.
- Similarly, the schools do not track potential dropouts in special programs from year to year, and there is no coordination among the programs.
- The schools must design more creative ways of raising the skill levels of students at risk of dropping out by seventh or eighth grade because they're not achieving. Alternative teaching methods and unconventional approaches that are based on meeting the developmental needs of at risk children must be built into the traditional system.
- There are few educational options for students who drop out. The schools should devote more resources to intensive one-to-one nurturing for potential dropouts and to a systemwide strategy for *preventing* dropping out.
- There is a need to improve communication between businesses and schools regarding competencies and the vocations students should train for.
- Schools are pressured to prepare kids for college rather than for the work world. The basic question asked when determining the quality of every school is, "How many students go on to college?" No one asks, "How many finish college?" or "How many take jobs?" Occupational awareness and successful work attitudes should be built in at every grade level throughout the curriculum.

Youth: resources

Although there is little research that speaks directly to the question of what resources youth offer in developing employability, employment training experts have identified several characteristics that program planners should consider.

Contrary to myth, youth — including at-risk youth — want to work. Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation's evaluations of such programs as the Youth Incentive Entitlement Program suggest that youths' willingness to meet school attendance and performance objectives demonstrates the strong work ethic so valued in this country. In addition, youth have fresh ideas and high levels of energy. They are strongly influenced by their peer group, which offers the ability to sanction behavior. Experts maintain that after parents, peers exert the second greatest influence on young people's educational and occupational plans. Accordingly, youth could counsel and serve as resources for other students. And although many at-risk youth lack a strong family support system, they can find that support in their peers. By "working the streets," many have developed entrepreneurial skills that could transfer to traditional work situations.

Youth: gaps

- At-risk youth need to develop more realistic job expectations. Some do not connect school achievement with potential earnings, and most have very little knowledge about practical economics in a free enterprise system.
- At-risk youth need to participate in designing employment training strategies. This participation would mean improved programs and a stronger willingness to commit to completing an educational/employment program.

Employers: resources

Whether private, public, or nonprofit, employers have similar resources and responsibilities. First and foremost, of course, employers offer the resource of jobs. Many businesses, particularly large corporations, also provide extensive training and retraining programs for their employees, not only in the specific job skills their companies need but also in basic academic skills. With minimal restructuring, that system could serve at-risk youth. Other employees, particularly those who have moved through the ranks from entry-level to supervisory positions, can serve as mentors and support for at-risk youth.

A few Minneapolis employers have set up cooperative work/education programs with the schools. However, these are primarily summer programs that have tended not to reach at-risk youth. Employers offer resources as yet largely untapped by schools and job programs. Employers can provide expertise in management, personnel evaluation, and the creative financing of new programs or materials. Reconnecting Youth, a report by the Business Advisory Commission of the Education Commission of the States, suggests that businesses also can "share their knowledge of how to get extraordinary performance out of ordinary people and how to revitalize faltering institutions."

Employers: gaps

One major step businesses could take in improving youth employability would be to restructure entry-level jobs to include an educational component. By providing transferable skills and the caring supervision teens need, employers could help at-risk youth make the transition from school to adult employment. Some companies, such as Wendy's, are restructuring entry-level fast food jobs to provide career opportunities in an attempt to retain more young workers. Others, such as Burger King, offer the incentive of scholarships for post-secondary education based on length of time in the job.

Additional gaps:

- A majority of jobs available to youth offer little flexibility in work schedules and performance expectations. Youth should be allowed to experiment with a job and be able to leave with a carefully written reference — without the stigma of failure.
- Employers and schools need to work more closely to define a threshold of employment competencies, which would be guaranteed along with a high school diploma. There also is a need for better communication between employment programs and employers regarding expectations for high-risk students and special training needed by their supervisors.
- Schools and employers could cooperatively promote educational achievement if employers agreed (as some Florida Burger King restaurants have done) not to hire or retain in-school youth unless they earn passing grades.

Employment and training programs: resources

Besides the schools, employment and training programs provide the other principal source of job preparation for the community's youth. In Minneapolis, the majority of federal, state, and city programs are administered by the Minneapolis Employment and Training Program. There are five primary programs available to at-risk youth: federally funded Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) IIA, which works through community-based organizations to secure part-time jobs for students during the school year; JTPA IIB, which offers summer employment; the Minnesota Youth Program, a state-funded program offering summer jobs; the Minneapolis Youth Work Internship Program, a city-funded partnership of the Chamber of Commerce, the schools, and the city that provides summer jobs for disadvantaged seniors and ongoing jobs for high school graduates; and the Transitional Work Internship Program (TWIP), which provides internships in city departments for youth who have graduated but are not tracking in the mainstream. Last year, these programs served approximately 1,700 Minneapolis youth.

In June 1986, a local consortium of educational and private organizations received word that its proposed "Career Beginnings" program was selected as 1 of 20 national demonstration projects by the Commonwealth Fund, managed by Brandeis University. Local funders include The Pillsbury Company, the University of Minnesota, and Augsburg College. Career Beginnings

annually provides career counseling and assessment, a mentor, and a summer work experience for 100 high school juniors and seniors. The purpose of the program is to foster post-secondary enrollment of disadvantaged students who receive passing grades in school but require stimulation and assistance for college enrollment. Although this program does not specifically address at-risk young people, its integrative approach offers a model for the community in designing collaborative strategies to serve dropouts, potential dropouts, and teen parents.

Employment and training programs: gaps

An informal survey of public and private youth employment programs in Minneapolis suggests that only about 10 percent offer basic skills remediation. Within that group of programs, instruction occupies from 5 to 100 percent of the time students spend in the program.[34] However, programs that do not provide academic instruction refer young people to other agencies that can provide remedial education. As a rule, job placement, work experience, and recruitment and counseling receive stronger emphasis within local employment programs.

Additional gaps:

- In recent years, cutbacks in federal funds for job programs have fostered an emphasis on short-term, quick-fix approaches by stressing job placement. Low payment for services prohibits job programs from providing more expensive, long-term learning which may involve one or two years of remedial education. Performance-based contracting, which involves payments per person placed in a job, has encouraged federally funded programs to work with those youth most likely to succeed, a process called "creaming." Performance-based contracting should be modified to compensate providers adequately for measurably increasing the employability of higher-risk youth; even better would be special incentives, such as bonuses, for obtaining results with these clients.
- Research has demonstrated that a high-quality, well-trained staff is an important component of a successful training program, but most existing programs lack the money to adequately train their staffs.
- There are a variety of educational, training, and employment services available to low-income youth. However, existing programs lack the resources to serve all dropouts and potential dropouts who need help.
- Program operators need to work closely with the schools to locate and recruit at-risk youth presently not being served.
- There is a need for a central clearinghouse of information on programs and services — so youth and families can take advantage of the training opportunities and so employers have a source of new employees.

Appendix 1

Examples Of Successful Programs For At-Risk Youth

Target Group	Program	Services
Dropouts	**Job Corps**	Provides remedial education, skills training, medical care, job counseling, and room and board in residential centers. Federally funded.
	Center for Employment and Training San Jose, Calif.	Provides occupational skills training and remedial education for minority youth. 150 local employers provide jobs for program graduates. Funded by JTPA and state money, plus foundation support.
	Job Start	Provides basic skills and occupational training, job placement for low-income 17-21-year-old dropouts. Also includes support services: counseling, mentoring, tutoring, child care, and transportation assistance. Modeled after Job Corps, but without the residential component. Federally funded.
	Operation Success New York State Dept. of Education	Offers counseling for parents and youth to encourage returning to school. Provides assistance to overcome specific educational and personal hardships. State funded.
	Alternative School Network Chicago	Community-based centers provide education, employment, and support services. Funded with JTPA money.
Potential Dropouts	**Youth Incentive Entitlement Pilot Project**	Operated 1978-81. Provided part-time jobs on condition of satisfactory school attendance and performance. A CETA program.
	Boston Compact	A partnership of businesses, schools, and the city launched in 1982 with the goal of assuring that high school graduates, 70 percent of whom come from disadvantaged backgrounds, are able to continue their education or secure good full-

		time jobs. Schools pledged improvements in dropout rates and basic competencies achievements if employers gave graduates priority in hiring.
	Cities in Schools	Federal program that emphasizes employment services and basic education for at risk youth. Partnership approach puts counseling, health, recreation, financial, legal, and employment services in the schools. Currently offered in 14 cities.
	STEP (Summer Training and Education Program)	Three year demonstration project launched by Public/Private Ventures, Philadelphia, with support from Ford Foundation. Provides a summer job and remedial education to 15,000 14-year-olds who failed a grade or read below grade level. Also includes family planning.
	Operation Success New York State Dept. of Education	Provides vocational skills training and works to improve students' self-image and encourage career goal setting. State funded.
	Vermillion County Central Illinois Summer Job Training Partnership Program	Offers remedial education and "try-out" employment to both urban and rural youth.
Teen Parents	**New Chance** National Demonstration Project	Uses a "tough love" approach — clear expectations but rich services: counseling, child care, education, employment training, transportation assistance, and family planning over 2 years or more. Preferential job placement for successful completers.
	New Futures Albuquerque, New Mexico	Offers educational, health, counseling, and employment services to teen mothers. Job placements are on condition of continued schooling and completion of program. Funded by public/private dollars.

Appendix 2

Minneapolis Youth Employment Programs'
Education And Training

These programs offer skills training, vocational education, basic skills remediation or other employment training.

		Educational Status		Eligibility	
Program	**Age**	**In-School**	**Out-Of-School**	**None**	**Income**
American Indian Opportunities Industrialization Center	16-21	X	X		X
American Variety Theatre Company–4H Club	14+	X	X		X
Center for Community Action Summer Youth Program	14-21	X	X	X	JTPA
Choices Plus	15-18	X			X
The City	14-21	X			X
Contact Plus	16-18	X			X
Destiny	12-18	X			
Fresh Force	13-14	X			

	Funding		Percent of Time Spent Remediating
Other	**Private**	**Public**	**Basic Skills**
GED Henn. Cty. resident		Federal	Unknown
	20%	JTPA County	25%
Based on need			Approx. 5-10%, informal
	X		
High school dropout	X	X	100%—each course emphasizes remediation of the basics
MPS 10th, 11th & 12th grade students	X		Unknown
8th grade, black students at Northeast Junior High with leadership potential		X	None
MPS 7th & 8th grade students	X	X	None

Program	Age	In-School	Out-Of-School	None	Income
Glendale Remodeling	14-21	X	X		X
Harrison Employment Preparation	13-18	X			
H.H.H. Job Corps Center (4 hrs./day math.)	16-20		X		X
Loring-Nicollet-Bethlehem Employment Assistance	15-21	X			X
Mpls. Education and Recycling Center	16-20		X		
Minneapolis Public Schools —Voc Tech and Industrial Education	15-18	X			
—Vocational Ed. for Adult Advancement					
Mpls. Urban League Street Academy	16-21	X			X
Mpls. Youth Work Internship Prog.	17-18	X			X

Other	Private	Public	Basic Skills
Glendale residents		JTPA	5-10%
Classified IEP and/or truant	X		None
MN/WI Youth Unemployed Lack job skills		Federal	Reading & GED preparation
South Mpls. resident	X	JTPA	45% on reading and math, 20% on social remediation
Mpls. res. unemployed drop-out	United Way	Mpls.	66% (10-15 hours/ week) for morning students. No remediation for afternoon, but 40% is spent on basic skills
Mpls resident		X	None
High school High School	X	MPS dropout JTPA	100% No remediation while in JTPA
Enrolled Jr. & Sr. JTPA	X	MPS	1%, approximately: —3 hours testing & referral, MPS —16 hours of assessment & referral to MPS —Remediation is in schools

Program	Age	In-School	Out-Of-School	None	Income
New Directions (PUNS)	14+	X	X		X
Park Avenue United Methodist Youth Employment Program	14+	X	X	X	
Pillsbury Center School Program	14-18	X			
Plymouth Christian Youth Center Alternative School	14-16	X			X
PPL Summer Youth Employment Program	14-18	X	X		X
Sumner-Olson Residents Council-Social and Recreational Services	16-21	X	X		X
Twin Cities Opportunities Industrialization Center (TCOIC)	17+	X	X		X
Work Opportunities Center	14-20		X		

Other	Private	Public	Basic Skills
		X	None—refer to community education
	X	JTPA	No remediation for summer on-the-job program; computer 16-20 hrs training, 16-20 hours per week during the summer, 100% school year
Enrolled at Center School	X		No remediation at Pillsbury, but part of Center
High school dropout			Unknown
Appropriate work behavior and skills	X		One day a week, Honeywell
Resident of public housing	X	JTPA	Informally, 2 sessions of review in preparation for GED exam/none, refer to school
Pass entrance exam At least 17 years old	X	X	Part of 5th and 6th grade reading level vocational program, GED preparation. English and math — at least 30% of students need remediation; ⅓ to ½ of day — 6 months. Courses are available on need/ competency basis
Mpls. residents		MPS	35-40%

Job Placement

These programs place people in jobs.

		Educational Status	
Program	**Age**	**In-School**	**Out-Of-School**
American Indian Opportunities Industrialization Center	16-21	X	X
Anishinabe Council of Job Developers	14+	X	X
Camp Sunrise	14-21	X	X
The City	14+		X
Currie Neighborhood Center	14-21	X	X
Employment Action Center	14-22	X	X
HIRED	18+		X
Honeywell Youth Employment Program	15-20	X	X
Hospitality House	14-18	X	X
H.H.H. Job Corps Center	16-20		X

Eligibility			Funding	
None	**Income**	**Other**	**Private**	**Public**
	X	GED Henn. County Resident		Federal
X			X	JTPA
X	(year-around)	Enrolled in a summer job program (summer program)	X	
	X	High school dropout	X	JTPA
	X	Classified as I.E.P. and/or truant	X	JTPA
	X	In school/GED or working toward GED	X	JTPA
		Mpls. resident unemployed 30 days		State
		Resident of Phillips or Central neighborhood	X	
		Age	X	X
	X	MN/WI Youth, unemployed, lack job skills		Federal

Program	Age	In-School	Out-Of-School
Loring-Nicollet-Bethlehem Employment Assistance	15-21		X
Mpls. Chamber Jobs Department OJT Program	16-21	X	X
HIRED Refugee Programs	16+	X	X
Mpls. Summer Youth Employment Program	14-21	X	X
Mpls. Urban League Street Academy	16-21		X
Mpls. Youth Work Internship Program	17-18	X	
MN Job Service	14-18		X
New Directions	14-21	X	X
Northeast Neighborhood House	14-21	X	X
Phyllis Wheatley Community Center	14-20	X	X
Plymouth Christian Youth Center Alternative School	15-21 16-21	(H.S. Dropouts) (Neighborhood residents)	X

None	Income	Other	Private	Public
	X	South Mpls. resident	X	JTPA
	X			JTPA
	X	Henn. County resident, refugee status		Refugee & targeted assistance programs
	X			JTPA
	X	Dropout	X	MPS JTPA
	X	Enrolled Jr. & Sr.	X	MPS JTPA
	X		X	
	X		No Funding	
X			X	X
X			X	
	X		X	JTPA

Program	Age	In-School	Out-Of-School
Summer Youth Employment Program	14-21	X	X
Sumner-Olson Residents Council-Social and Recreational Services	16-21	X	X
Transitional Work Internship Program	18-21		X
Twin Cities Opportunities Industrialization Center (TCOIC)	17+	X	X

None	Income	Other	Private	Public
	X		X	JTPA
	X	Resident of public housing	X	JTPA
		Mpls. resident H.S. graduates		X
	X	Pass entrance exam. At least 17 years old	X	X

Recruitment And Counseling

These programs offer referral services to training programs and jobs. They differ from job placement programs because their primary responsibility is referral rather than insuring placement. The second group of programs included in this section also provide pre-employment counseling, which often includes career education, self-assessment and job search skills.

		Educational Status	
Program	**Age**	**In-School**	**Out-Of-School**
Career Beginnings	17-18	X	
Destiny	12-18	X	
Harrison Employment Preparation (PUNS)	13-18	X	
Minneapolis Public Schools			
Career Education			
—Social Studies	13-15	X	
—Guidance Counselor	13-18	X	
—Home Room; "Looking Beyond High School"	18	X	
—Vocational, Technical and Industrial Ed.	14-18	X	
—Cooperative Ed.	16-17		
—Vocational Ed. for Adult Advancement	16+		X

Eligibility			Funding	
None	**Income**	**Other**	**Private**	**Public**
	X		X	X
		8th grade, black student at Northeast Junior High with leadership potential (career education, self assessment, job search)		X
		Classified I.E.P. and/or truant	X	
X				X
X				X
X				X
X				X
	X			X
				X

Program	Age	In-School	Out-Of-School
MN Job Service	14+	X	
Phyllis Wheatley Community Center Job Search Seminar	13-18	X	X
Pillsbury Center School Program	14+	X	
Component of Other Employment Programs			
American Variety Theatre 4-H	14+	X	X
Anishinabe Council of Job Developers	14+	X	
Camp Sunrise	14-21	X	X
Career Exploration	15	X	
Centre for Asians and Pacific Islanders	14-21	X	X
Choices Plus	15-18	X	
The City	14-21		X
Currie Neighborhood Center, PUNS	14-21	X	
Employment Action Center	14-22	X	X

None	Income	Other	Private	Public
				X
X			X	X
		Enrolled in Center School		
	X		20%	JTPA County
	X		X	JTPA
X (year-around)		Enrolled in summer job program (summer program)	X	
		MPS student		X
	X		X	JTPA
	X		X	
	X	High school dropout	X	X
	X		X	JTPA
	X	In school/GED and/or working toward GED	X	JTPA

Program	Age	In-School	Out-Of-School
Glendale Remodeling	14-20	X	X
Honeywell Youth Employment Prog.	15-20	X	X
H.H.H. Job Corps Center	16-20		X
Looking Foward High School	14	X	
Loring-Nicollet-Bethlehem Employment Assistance	14-21		X
Mpls Education and Recycling	16-20		X
Mpls Urban League Street Academy	16-21		X
Mpls Youth Work Internship Prgm	17-18	X	
Northeast Neighborhood House	14-21	X	X
Pillsbury Center School Program	14-18	X	
Plymouth Christian Youth Center Alternative School	15-21 (dropouts) 16-21 (neighbor hood)	X	X
Sumner-Olson Residents Council Social & Recrea-tional Services	16-21	X	X

None	Income	Other	Private	Public
	X	Glendale resident		JTPA
		Resident of Phillips or Central neighborhood	X	
	X	MN/WI Youth unemployed lack job skills		X
		MPS student		X
	X	South Mpls. resident	X	X
		Mpls. resident, unemployed, Lack job skills		Federal
	X	Dropout	X	X
	X	Enrolled Jr. & Sr.	X	MPS JTPA
X		NE and SE resident	X	X
		Enrolled at Center School	X	
	X	High school dropout	X	JTPA
	X	Resident of public housing	X	X

Work Experience

These programs employ youth. In some programs the primary purpose of employment is on the job training.

		Educational Status	
Program	**Age**	**In-School**	**Out-Of-School**
American Variety Theatre Company–4-H Club	14+	X	X
Camp Sunrise	14-21	X	X
Center for Asians and Pacific Islanders Youth	14-21	X	X
Center for Community Action Summer Youth Program	14-21	X	X
Choices Plus	15-18	X	
Contact Plus	16-18	X	
Evenheat	14-18		
Glendale Remodeling	14-21	X	X
Hennepin County Juvenile Court Restitution Unit Worksquad Program	13-18	X	X
Mpls Education & Recycling Center	16-20		X

Eligibility			Funding	
None	**Income**	**Other**	**Private**	**Public**
	X	County	20%	JTPA
X	(year around)	Enrolled in a summer job program (summer program)		
	X		X	JTPA
	X		X	JTPA
	X		X	
	X	10th, 11th and 12th grade MPS students	X	
		Mpls residents	?	
	X	Glendale residents		JTPA
		Adjudicated youth, court assigned to unit		X
		Mpls. resident, unemployed, lack job skills		Federal

Program	Age	In-School	Out-Of-School
Mpls Public Schools — Co-op Education			
Mpls Youth Work Internship	17-18	X	
PPL Summer Youth Employment Program	14-18	X	X
Teen Teamworks	14-18	X	X
Transitional Work Internship Program	18-21		X
Twin Cities Tree Trust	14-21	X	X
Youth Futures	15-20	X	X

• This information was prepared for the SchoolWork Report by Earl Craig and Mary Ellen Spector of the Earl Craig Company.

None	Income	Other	Private	Public
	X	Enrolled Jr. & Sr.	X	MPS JTPA
	X	Appropriate work behavior and skills	X	
		At-risk youth	X	X
		Mpls. resident H.S. graduates		X
	X	Economically, mentally and/or physically disadvantaged residents of metro area	X	X
X			X	

Appendix 3

Youth Employment Task Force Membership List

Jane Foster, Co-chair
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Appendix 4

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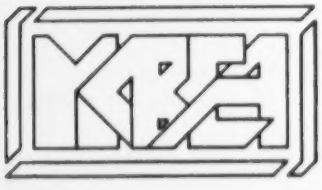

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